

168. Needs of the Catholic Christians.

MR. ULAHANNAN ULAHANNAN (*Member, Minachil taluk, Group II*) said the Catholics, an important community in the State, had not got fair representation in the public service. Though, in population and education, they were not backward, their community had not been duly represented in the several departments. Although numerous representations had been made on the subject, the Government did not appear to have pursued any definite policy to redress the grievances of the community in the matter. Even if the Government passed any orders on the subject, they were not being strictly observed by the Heads of Departments. While there were able and qualified hands among the Catholics, it was regrettable that their claims were ignored by Heads of Departments when making new appointments.

Very few Catholics had been entertained in the Revenue Department after the Revenue-Devaswom separation. There were more than 400 *Provertikars* in the State, but only a handful had been recruited from among the non-Hindus and non-caste Hindus, after the separation. There was not even a single Catholic among the Tahsildars.

The Catholics were heartily co-operating with the Government in the education of the country by opening educational institutions in various parts of the State. Yet, in the matter of appointments even in the Education Department, they were denied proper encouragement.

Similarly in the Public Works, Registration, Excise, Police, Judicial and other departments, the Catholic Christians were not given any representation worth the name; and the Government had not made any definite ruling to give the community due representation in those departments.

The Government had no doubt laid down the policy that, in the matter of appointments, preference would be given to poorly represented communities, regard being had to efficiency and qualification of the candidates. But it was also necessary to see that the policy was followed in actual practice. Many Heads of Departments considered men of their own community alone as efficient and duly qualified. The Catholics did not wish that any special concessions should be accorded to them in the matter of recruitment to the public service. Only, equal opportunities should be given to all classes of subjects of the State to serve the Government in its various branches of service.

DEWAN'S REPLY : Mr. Ulahannan Ulahannan, let me assure you that the Government are not making any discrimination against the Catholic Christians of Travancore. You mention a few appointments which are not occupied by Catholics ; but you refrained from mentioning the appointments that are occupied by Catholics. It is inevitable that Catholics should not hold as many appointments as others, for the simple reason that they lagged long behind in education ; and it is only now they are beginning to recover lost ground ; and I have not the slightest doubt that, in course of time at the rate of progress they are now making, they will establish themselves in a position of equality with the other communities in the State in the matter of filling Government appointments. But again I can assure you that the Government are doing nothing to impose disabilities upon the Catholic Christians or to discriminate in any way against them.

169. Disabilities of the Christians.

MR. JACOB CURIEN (*Member, Nominated*) said that one of the main objects of the separation of the Revenue from the Devaswom Department was to afford facilities for the free recruitment of Ezhavas, Christians, Mahomedans and members of other communities in the Revenue Department. It was but fair that equal opportunities be afforded to all communities for entering the chief and subordinate offices of all departments. It was not proper to keep out a large section of the subjects of the State, such as the Christians, from entering the Revenue Department. The Revenue-Devaswom separation was effected as a result of the unanimous effort of the non-Hindus and non-caste Hindus. The majority of the people of Travancore depended on agriculture for their livelihood. The well-being of every community in Travancore would be affected if it was not given due representation in the Revenue Department, because land and the officers administering the Land Revenue Department